

SpDISCLAIMER: *This is a summary of the referenced meeting of the Hamilton School District Board of Trustees (“the Board”) and is based on the written notes and memory of individuals in attendance. The notes are intended to capture only the main points made during the meeting and they reflect a subjective work-in-progress. The notes do not imply a specific opinion or commitment on the part of any individual or organization represented at the meeting. This summary is neither an official transcript, nor should it be relied upon for any official purpose. This summary is not intended to replace, or in any way affect, the official Minutes of the Board.*

**Special Board Meeting I
Notes on Agenda Items
August 17, 2021**

Board Members Present:

Heidi Apedaile
Drew Blankenbaker
Tim Campbell (via telephone)
Patrick Hanley
Jeni Seifert
Rebekah Stamp
Seth Gale Wyrick

Board Members Not Present:

District Business:

1. Reports:

None at this time.

2. Consent Agenda:

None at this time.

3. Old Business:

A. Recommendation for Re-Opening Plan (Action

Superintendent Korst explained that due to ESSER funding requirements, the District must have a re-opening plan for the 2021-2022 academic year. Superintendent Korst summarized his proposed re-opening plan for the Board’s consideration and reviewed the mitigation strategies the District took during its successful 2020-2021 academic year. Superintendent Korst explained that the District would continue its efforts to sanitize facilities, evaluate opportunities for HVAC/air flow improvement in buildings, and to promote hand washing and good respiratory etiquette. Superintendent Korst explained that his proposed re-opening plan allowed for personal

choice for masking in grades 6 through 12. He added that for grades k-5, masking would not be required outdoors, or while students are indoors among their regular cohorts. Rather, masking would be required only when k-5 students are: indoors and outside their regular cohorts while under circumstances where social distancing cannot be maintained. All students would be required to wear masks while on busses pursuant to federal law. Finally, Superintendent Korst requested that the Board approve 5 additional personal days for all staff in order to encourage them to stay home when they are feeling ill.

Board Chair Hanley thanked the community for communicating with the Board through email and phone calls as well as for attending the Board meeting. Board Chair Hanley explained that Board members take these issues very seriously and will consider all community comments prior to making a decision.

After Board Chair Hanley explained the ground rules for public comment, approximately 60 community members shared their views and asked questions with regard to the District's re-opening plan. Commentors included parents, teachers, students, Hamilton residents, and online meeting participants. The perspectives shared ranged from advocating for universally required masking, to advocating for individual masking choice.

Following the public comment period, Board discussion began and Board member Gale Wyrick moved to amend the re-opening plan to require that children 11 and younger wear masks until 4-6 weeks after a vaccination is available to that population. The motion was seconded by Board Vice Chair Blankenbaker. Board member Apedaile stated that she disagreed with the motion because she believes that there are options for those who are in a high risk or compromised health situation; such as virtual learning. Board member Seifert stated that she is concerned that we have removed some layers of prevention, but likes Superintendent Korst's proposed re-opening plan because it provides compromise and consistency. Board Chair Hanley stated that, while he struggles with this issue, he sees the County Health Board's role as being responsible for making decisions regarding masking and the Board's role as being responsible for the educational process. Board Chair Hanley stated that he likes Superintendent Korst's proposed re-opening plan because it allows for communication, but also allows the District to help prevent transmission of COVID-19. Board member Gale Wyrick stated that he does not believe the proposed re-opening plan represents a compromise.

Board member Seifert asked at what point the District will decide that there are too many COVID-19 cases in a classroom and re-visit the plan. Board member Stamp asked how often the Board will meet to re-visit the plan. Superintendent Korst indicated that the decision to shut down a school would be based on input from the County Health Department, just as it would be in the event of any other infectious disease outbreak (such as Pertussis) and that the Board can choose to make this a standing agenda item.

Board Vice Chair Blankenbaker stated that he has heard the public's comments, as well as input from District administrators and community stakeholders. In support of masking younger students, he further stated that young children do not have a choice to vaccinate and that he believes that personal choice for others stops when there are public repercussions.

Board member Apedaile stated that she supports following County Health's recommendation and giving parents the choice to mask their children. She also commented that she doesn't understand why some Board members were willing to follow County Health's recommendations last year, but not this year.

Board Vice Chair Blankenbaker amended Board member Gale Wyrick's pending motion to: all students from pre-K to 6th grade will wear masks until vaccines are available (plus 6 weeks) and that if cases drop dramatically before a vaccine is available, that the Board will have discretion to remove masks. This motion failed by a 4 to 3 vote of the Board.

Board member Apedaile moved to approve Superintendent Korst's recommendation with the caveat that the decision will be revisited as necessary. A summary of the public comment is included, above. The Board approved this Action Item.

4. New Business:

None at this time.

5. Policies and Procedures:

None at this time.

Public Comment:

There was no additional public comment on non-Agenda items.

The next regular Board Meeting will be held on September 14, 2021.